

2.4. AIDS Mortality and Survival in Tennessee

2.4.1. Introduction

National trends in deaths attributed to HIV infection and the complications of AIDS in 1994 and 1995 continue to increase. A special CDC study of 10% of death certifications filed in the 50 states and the District of Columbia showed that in 1994 an estimated 41,930 U.S. residents died from AIDS, a 9% increase over 1993. Of these decedents, 3% were aged less than 25 years; 72% 25-44 years; and 25% 45 years of age or older. AIDS was the 8th leading cause of death overall, accounting for 2% of all deaths. Among persons aged 25-44 years, AIDS was the leading cause of death, accounting for 19% of deaths in this age-group. In 1994 nationally, AIDS became the fourth leading cause of years of potential life lost before age 65.

Among males aged 25-44, AIDS was the leading cause of death for all males (23% of deaths) and for white and black males (20% and 32% of deaths, respectively). AIDS was the third leading cause of death for females in this age-group accounting for 11% of deaths overall -- 6% among white females and 22% among black females.

In 1994, the death rate from HIV infection and AIDS complications per 100,000 population among persons aged 25-44 years was about four times as high for black males (177.9) as white males (47.2) and nine times as high for black females (51.2) as for white females (5.7). Compared to 1993, rates for white males remained constant, while rates for black males and white and black females continued to rise, increasing by 13%, 30% and 28%, respectively. The rate for black females aged 25-44 years surpassed that for white males in that age-group.

The use of death certificate data on underlying cause of death underestimates the impact of HIV infection on mortality. Studies have indicated that among persons aged 25-44 years, under-reporting of deaths attributable to HIV infection may range from 25% to 33%. When multiple causes of death are taken into account, the estimated number of death certificates in the CDC study with any mention of HIV infection was 6000. This represents an excess of 12.5% over the number of certificates in which HIV infection was given as the underlying cause. An estimated 55,000 to 60,000 persons with AIDS died in the U.S. in 1994 with only 42,000 captured using the underlying cause code. Fully 24% to 30% of AIDS deaths are missed annually, and the numbers for individual states may be higher²¹.

²¹ "CDC Update: Mortality Attributable to HIV Infection among Persons aged 25-44 Years -United States, 1994." **Journal of the American Medical Association**. 1996; 275,9:675,677.